



**UN Disarmament Commission Working Group on Space
12 April 2018**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

I would like to summarize some of the positions expressed by the EU and its MSs in the UNDC sessions as well as in other fora which we deem crucial for our future deliberations and we would therefore like to see them being properly reflected in your paper.

Mr. Chairman,

First of all we would like to reiterate our commitment to the five United Nations treaties on outer space and five UNGA sets of principles as well as other related documents and resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly that constitute the cornerstone of international space law.

We have been long advocating the preservation of a safe and secure space environment and peaceful uses of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. Strengthening the safety, security, and long-term sustainability of activities in outer space is a key priority for us and in our common interest.

From this perspective development of Transparency and Confidence Building Measures (TCBMs) that will provide an important contribution to the security, safety and sustainability of activities in outer space, and the promotion of principles of responsible behavior in outer space in the framework of the United Nations and other appropriate multilateral fora should be a crucial priority for all of us. This is the reason why the EU proposed some years ago an international Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities and will keep on promoting meaningful initiatives in this domain. We strongly believe there would be value in agreeing, as one of the next steps, on a non-legally binding instrument, potentially to be negotiated within the framework of the UN, as a way to deliver not only these objectives but also others we enumerated in our statements both last week and last autumn:

- at 1st Committee Discussion on Outer Space,
- at 4th Committee Discussion on International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space and
- at the joint 1st and 4th Committee Session on Possible Challenges to Space Security and Sustainability.

To frame this part of the Outer Space topic we would like to underline that efforts to pursue political commitments, through a comprehensive approach, dealing with both civil and military aspects of space activities, and as a complement to existing international law, were endorsed by the Group of Governmental Experts on TCBMs in outer space. We highly value the work of this Group and propose to focus on discussions how to implement measures proposed by them for the benefit of all.

Mr. Chairman,

Several delegations during the previous debates have recalled and promoted the GA resolution on "No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space" (NFP). We are sure that the EU position on this initiative is well known, mainly from our Explanation of Vote delivered last October after the vote on this resolution in 1st Committee. We deem, however, necessary to recall our principal concern why this initiative does not adequately respond to the objective of strengthening trust and confidence between States, but rather increases the risk of conflict in space. This initiative in fact does not address the difficult issue of pertinently defining what a weapon in outer space is, which could easily lead a State to mistakenly assess that another State has placed weapons in outer space. We also remain concerned of the continued development of all anti-satellite weapons and capabilities, including terrestrially based, and underline the importance of addressing such developments promptly and as part of international efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space.

We believe that initiatives aiming at preventing an arms race in outer space should contribute to fostering a climate of mutual trust and transparency. We therefore believe political commitments by States to act responsibly in, to and from outer space would be a more effective means of preserving the long-term sustainability of outer space without excluding the possibility that this may one day result in new legally binding norms. We therefore propose, rather than introducing a NFP pledge, to address the behaviour in, and use of, outer space in order to advance meaningful discussions and initiatives on how to prevent space from becoming an arena for conflict and to ensure the long-term sustainability of the space environment.

In this regard we would like to remind that the EU remains strongly committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space and therefore, all 28 EU Member States vote in favor of UN General Assembly Resolution regarding the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS).

Similarly, when speaking about legally non-binding instruments that help to increase mutual trust and confidence, it is important to notice that all 28 EU Member States subscribed also to The Hague Code of Conduct (HCoC) which is the only multilateral transparency and confidence-building instrument against the proliferation of ballistic missiles and has an obvious overlap to the Outer Space activities. The EU will continue to promote the universality, full implementation and enhanced functioning of the Code. We call on all States, in particular those with significant activities in the area of ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles, to subscribe and to adhere to the Code as soon as possible.

Finally, we reiterate our strong support to the very important work that has been carried out by the COPUOS Working Group on Long Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities and call on all COPUOS member States to work in a cooperative and constructive spirit in order to reach agreement on a full compendium of guidelines by June this year.